

Functional Capacity Evaluation

Rehabilitation professionals strive to provide services and therapeutic techniques in their daily practice that enhance their clinical model. Some therapists specialize in vestibular disorders, some in neurological disorders, and some specialize in orthopedics. Rehab professionals work for various organizations whether they are large hospital organizations or private practice.

No matter where they work within the medical profession, they have many opportunities to specialize in certain areas of rehab. Specialization and implementation of industrial rehabilitation programming allows you to specialize in a highly desirable area of rehabilitation and it also allows for increased revenue and patient volume.

The crown jewel of industrial rehabilitation is the Functional Capacity Evaluation. An FCE defines your specialization and if you provide high quality reports, your referral sources will think of you first for all workers' compensation patients. Making sure you have a comprehensive and industry tested, FCE is extremely important. FCE's that have validity and reliability studies have been shown to hold up in a court of law.



What should I look for in an FCE?

In today's technologically archaic healthcare environment, a Functional Capacity Evaluation that is effective and efficient is key! Many rehab clinics are struggling to hire staff and the amount of time they have to perform a 4 hour FCE is limited. When choosing a company that offers FCE's, you need to make sure that the tool you are using does not take up valuable patient treatment time. You need to make sure that the documentation is completed using today's highest level of technology. You should be able to complete your entire report within 15 minutes! Secondly, you need

to make sure that the programming you implement has reliability studies tied to it. Inter-rater and intra-rater reliability is extremely important for a test to stand up in a court of law.

Many of today's FCE's are time consuming and the final reports are like reading the directions to assembling the space shuttle! Who can understand everything that is written in an FCE which is filled with medical terminology that even a physician cannot decipher?

An FCE needs to be easy and quick to read! A referral source needs to be able to have all of their questions answered in the first half of the first page. The items that need to be answered up front include:

- The physical demand level the client is able to perform within based on the physical demand level definitions in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles
- What percentage of the overall essential physical demands is the client able to perform
- What percentage of the evaluation was valid and consistent
- If the evaluation was invalid then why
- What were the limiting factors noted during testing that did not allow the patient to meet 100% of the physical demands of the job
- Overall recommendations that include return to work, continued therapy, work hardening/conditioning programming or pain management on occasion.

Functional Capacity Evaluations are comprehensive tools used in the field of industrial rehabilitation that enhance a therapy practice and establish your clinic as a specialist in the rehabilitation of the injured worker within your geographic location. There are many important aspects in regards to choosing an FCE system. Remember that FCE systems that are efficient and enhance your practice because of their high quality are just as important as reliability and validity.